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either in king or people when they go to war. Offensive war is forbidden by all history, experience, and common sense—by the teachings of reason and revelation alike."

Frederick has the reputation of having been an atheist. It is clear he was not that; it is equally clear that he was not a believer in revealed religion, though he was the hero of the Protestant cause, and took up arms in its defence. His companions were men of wit, and the wits of that age were such men as Voltaire. He was fond of literature and music, and was a skilful performer on the flute himself. Dr. Burney, who visited Prussia in 1772, and whose judgment cannot be questioned, says: "His Majesty's embouchure was clear and even, his finger brilliant, and his taste clear and simple. I was much pleased, and even surprised, with the neatness of his execution in the allegros, as well as by his expression and feeling in the adagio: in short, his performance surpassed, in many particulars, anything I had ever heard among *dilettanti*, and even professors. His Majesty played three long and difficult concertos successively, and all with equal perfection." His supper-parties were pleasant enough, though the conversation was often more than humorous and witty; for, bashful as Frederick was in regard to his person, he was very free in his language. In the town of Berlin he was popular enough; the inhabitants ran to the doors and took off their hats. Many walked alongside of him that they might have a better view of the great king. A great number of boys always ran before and behind him. It is related, that one day, when the young troop were too annoying, he lifted his crutch-stick, and, shaking it at them, bade them begone,

which drew forth a peal of laughter, one of the young urchins calling out, "A pretty king, indeed! Why, does he not know that Wednesday is a half-holiday?" Frederick was very economical. A country clergyman once solicited from the king an order that his congregation should supply him with forage for a horse, because he was unable to walk to do duty at a chapel in a distant part of the country. Underneath his petition Frederick wrote: "The Bible does not say, *ride* into all the world, but *go* into all the world, and preach to all nations." His dress bore ample testimony to Frederick's penurious character. One of the writers of his life states, that "all the king's shirts were found, at his death, to be so torn and out of repair, that there was not one fit to be put upon the corpse. As there was not time to get a new one made, his valet brought one of his own which he had never worn, and which had been presented to him by his bride; and in this the deceased monarch was buried." The whole of the royal wardrobe, when sold to a Jew, reached only 400 dollars—no very large sum, we confess; but Frederick was no ordinary monarch, and placed little dependence on his tailor. We may as well add here, that it was not till the hundredth anniversary of Frederick's accession to the throne of Prussia, that the foundation-stone was laid in his own capital for the monument to his memory—an equestrian statue by Rauch. Whatever the world may think of Frederick, Prussia owes him much. When he came to it, it was little better than a province; when he left it, it held the chief rank amongst the European monarchies. In his own time no king wore a kinglier crown, or wielded a more royal power.

RUSSIAN LIFE.

It is a happy day in Russia when, for the first time in the year, the sun looks down on the waters of the Nera, and the floating masses of ice are swept away. Flowers begin to spread their petals in the light, and tender leaves to tremble in the gentle breath of spring, and birds to preen themselves on bud-covered branches, and to tune their voices for a summer song. And more than this, the official life of St. Petersburg breaks up like the ice on the river, and the etiquette of the court is thawed, and grave nobles and officers, and pretty Russian damsels, nobly born, who all the winter long have been hard-frozen into the routine of a state life, begin to disappear from lofty mansions and wide streets, and to relieve their long wintry campaign by the luxury and the freedom of country life. Away they go to look on the fields and the prairies, to feel the delights of unconstraint amid the sweet perfume of the flowers.

They do not go to old baronial mansions, stiff and formal as a baron of the days of Lionheart, nor to elegantly fitted villas, filled with every luxury which art can invent or effeminacy desire. The country-houses of Russia are neither built of brick nor stone—simply of wood, painted with all the colours of the rainbow, but without any other attempt at decoration. They are thoroughly comfortable within, notwithstanding, and afford a very agreeable change to the solemn magnificence of St. Petersburg. A man feels at home in a log-house, and even a Russian noble seems for a time to forget that he is not his own, and that he has nothing that he can call his own, and to be as free and happy as a bee sucking honey from a flower. By the way, these wooden houses are surrounded by some of the pleasantest gardens our readers ever saw. It is remarkable that all people, east, west, north, and south, love flowers. The Russian cultivates his patch of garden-ground most carefully, and noble lords seem there as much at home as Cincinnatus on his farm.

There is one thing very peculiar about these Russian country-houses: they are built in every variety of architecture. Here rises up a wooden dwelling modelled after the Greek; here another, with capitals and porticoes, and cornices and columns, never brought together before by any possible chance; here a dwelling that looks like an old Athenian house, and

here another the very counterpart of a brother in Stamboul. All the spring and summer there is plenty of gaiety going on in these strange dwellings. Now a grand *fête*, now a general holiday, now a village festival, now a saint's-day, now a reception of serfs, now a birthday, now a marriage. The opportunities for rejoicing are not few nor far between, and the Russian lords "at home" are not unmindful of them. Sometimes the nobles flock together to the dwelling of a greater noble than they, who gives some splendid feast in honour of them all. Thus, a little while ago, the Grand Duke Michael, brother of the present emperor, gave a magnificent entertainment to the nobility. Everything which could contribute to the festivity of the occasion was prepared; the forests and gardens and parks presented new wonders and attractions at every turn. All day long the guests were entertained; but the night surpassed the day in the extent and gorgeous character of its amusement. There was an orchestra of immense extent, crowded with performers of first-rate ability; a ball, perhaps the largest and most magnificent on record; and fireworks that were not to be outdone. Wonder after wonder, marvel upon marvel—verily a turning of night into day; showers of fire, fountains of fire, cascades of fire, pyramids of fire; fiery dragons, elves, and goblins; fiery serpents, eagles, and Greek crosses followed in quick succession; fiery bouquets of flowers that split into ten thousand fragments and formed an imperial crown, which crown's appearance was hailed with shouts and the national strain or "God save King Muscovite!"

All the spring, all the summer, feasts and rejoicings such as these delight the Russian nobles; and when from his cold retreat Winter comes forth again, and scatters autumn leaves, and chains up the babbling stream, and silences the birds, and kills the flowers, he puts an end to the festivities, and, along with streams and rivers, freezes the Russian nobility into cold proprieties and the icy etiquette of the imperial court.

The place at which the grand festival occurred, of which we spoke above, was called Paulowsky. A little way to the west of Paulowsky, on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, is the château and imperial park of Peterhoff. No one can forget the beauty of the road which leads to this residence: once

seen, it is indelibly stamped on the memory. What a beautiful panorama it presents! Every turning in the road is marked by a granite obelisk or a graceful château, or a beautiful villa, almost hidden in the surrounding trees; and viewed from a height, the dotted, variegated landscape looks as beautiful as the spotted wings of a butterfly. It is one of the most picturesque roads in all Russia, and one fails to recollect, surrounded by its exquisite scenery, the misery, cruelty, and crime which are hidden beneath so fair an exterior. If the road is delightful, the château itself is still more so, and the views which it commands are alone sufficient to attract the traveller to its locality.

On the road to Peterhoff, you pass by the castle of luxurious

"Nothing, a mere nothing?"

"Exactly so, your majesty."

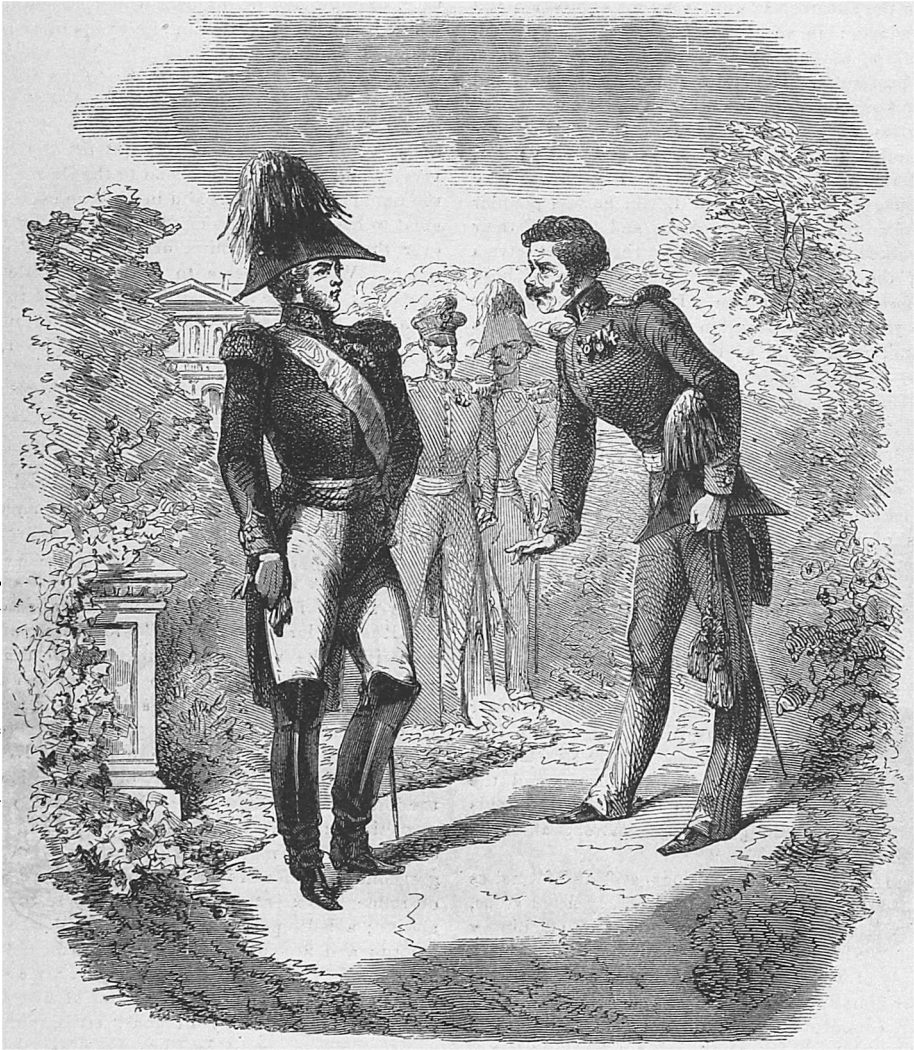
"Well, but how much?"

"Thirty rubles, more or less."

"How is this possible?"

"It is quite true, sire; 'tis the mere silver necessary for buying the stamped paper."

In fact, the opulence of Narischkine simply consisted of bills and mortgages, which served his turn well enough, and left the burden to his successors. It did not last, however, so long as he expected; and sadly he felt the want of silver for some other purpose than simply buying stamped paper. In his distress, the emperor sent him a book, in the leaves of



THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER AND NARISCHKINE.

memory, the true castle of indolence and dissipation—where the famous Narischkine so often entertained the emperor Alexander. It is now in ruins—silent are the halls of Balclutha—the grass grows on the threshold. But the very ruin is suggestive. One thinks of the money squandered so prodigally, but so cruelly exacted. As the shades of evening gather around it, the gray mist peoples the ghostly hall, and the be-ruffled and perfumed guests seem once more to throng its lofty chambers. One day, so goes the story, the favourite had given to the emperor one of the most splendid feasts with which he had ever testified his loyalty; when Alexander suddenly turned upon him, and asked,

"What does all this cost, now?"

"A mere nothing, your majesty."

which was placed a note for a hundred thousand rubles. Narischkine took the book, and sent no answer. When the emperor met him, he asked:

"Ah, by the way, what do you think of the book I sent you?"

"I must read," replied the favourite, "the second volume before I can form a judgment of the work."

Alexander sent him another volume, enclosing a like sum; but on the cover of the book was written: "*Volume II. and last.*"

Peterhoff is the Versailles of Russia. It is the place where every year the feast of the empress is celebrated, with splendid illuminations and artificial fireworks, more gigantic and wonderful than the "Thousand and One Nights." It presents

some of the most animated scenes it is possible to imagine. The roads which lead to it from St. Petersburg are covered with equipages of all sorts, the Neva and the Gulf of Finland are crowded with steamboats, and an almost endless variety of vessels bearing holiday-folks to Peterhoff. And amid the gay festivities of that place the emperor himself freely mingles with his people. Czar Nicholas is quite at home with his subjects, and in private life the autocrat is one of the simplest of men. One or two curious anecdotes are related of him, which, whatever may be our opinion of his conduct, or the position which he has now assumed with respect to Turkey and the states of Europe, are interesting.

When the emperor formed the project of altering the head-

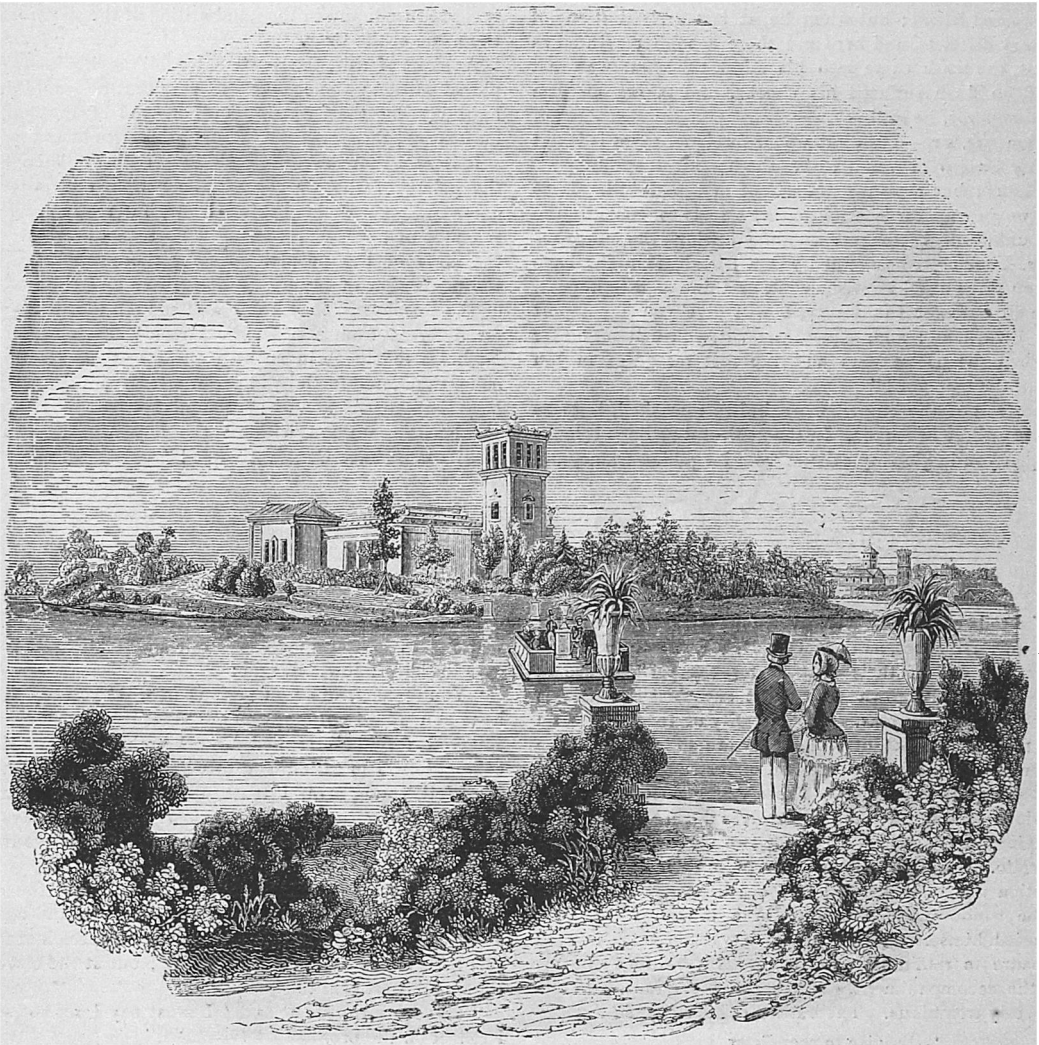
"Ah, that is very dear, very expensive; how would you like to pay a similar sum?"

"Sire," said the painter, "I believe your majesty has a fortune!"

The retort gratified the emperor, who repeated it many times after, and took the painter into his special favour.

Fond of adventure, the emperor goes much about St. Petersburg *incog*. One day he entered a tavern in one of the most fashionable and most frequented quarters of the city; he there noticed a young man elegantly dressed and smoking a cigar, with the same free and easy fashion as he might in New York, Paris, or London.

The emperor accosted him and gave him the military salute.



THE ISLE OF THE CZARINA, PETERHOFF.

dress of his guards, he appealed to Ladinere, his military painter.

"What do you think," he asked, "of my project?"

"I approve of it entirely, your majesty; will you allow me to design a model?"

It was designed and executed.

Some days afterwards Ladinere waited on the Czar with a most magnificent helmet.

"Will your majesty favour me by trying it?" he asked.

"Willingly."

So the emperor placed the helmet on his head.

"Marvellously good—thank you; by the way, what is the cost?"

The painter mentioned a very large sum.

"I suppose, sir," he said, "you have but recently arrived in St. Petersburg?"

"Even so, good sir; you have described my case exactly."

"Then, of course," continued the emperor, "you are unacquainted with the fact that you are breaking the police regulations at the present moment."

"How so?"

"You smoke."

"And does the law forbid smoking here?"

"Undoubtedly."

"In that case a thousand thanks; the law for ever!"

The stranger took his cigar from his mouth and was about to cast it away.

"Nay!" said the emperor, "while you are with me you have nothing to fear, and may smoke if you please."

"Are you then some great boyard, that I am safe under your protection?" returned the young man, smiling.

"I have some slight influence," said the emperor, "and what influence I do possess I will exert on your behalf."

"Thanks! thanks!"

The young man puffed away once more, and putting his arm familiarly within the proffered arm of the emperor, they marched on, talking cheerfully enough. "The stranger expressed his opinion freely on all topics connected with Russian trade and commerce. He did not appear to notice the striking resemblance that the imperial portraits—and in St. Petersburg the imperial portraits are everywhere—bore to his good-tempered friend; but when he at last arrived at one of the military districts, and here and there a soldier saluted as they went, the truth came into his mind, the cigar was cast away, a deep flush suffused his cheeks, and taking his arm from the emperor, he said—

"Pardon me, sire—I am but a poor foreigner; yet is it not the mighty Czar with whom I have the honour of speaking?"

"The same; but reassure yourself of my good-will. It is not always an emperor is strolling the streets to come to the relief of uninformed strangers who may infringe the police regulations. Your cigar has gained you a friend; it might have gained you three days' imprisonment, or a fine of fifty kopecks. To make all sure for the future, I will give you a passport with my own hand; and, depend upon it, you will get on far better when the postmasters and the rest recognise in you a friend of the emperor!"

The portrait of the emperor, we before remarked, is to be found everywhere in Russia. In the noblest dwellings it looks down upon you in glowing colours from its golden frame, and

in humble homes it confronts the visitor in the shape of a common print on a bare wall. Everything connected with the emperor is held in the highest esteem—his will, absolute, is respected by all throughout the vast extent of his empire. A traveller relates that he was journeying on a very bad road from one Russian town to another, and that as time was important, seeing that he had despatches for the French government, he urged his postillion or driver to do his utmost in the way of speed. But the driver, a stolid, uncompromising man, still proceeded at a leisurely pace, and, despite every remonstrance, would not urge his horses—"little doves," as he called them—into a good round pace. On arriving at one of the post-houses, our traveller urged his complaint; it was listened to with the utmost carelessness, till the passport was produced, and in the handwriting of the emperor appeared the name of the Czar.

At sight of this, the postmaster fell on his knees and implored pardon; the coachman swore that he would drive like lightning for the emperor, and, instead of indifference and inattention, there was the utmost promptitude and despatch.

It is said that the utmost enthusiasm prevails on behalf of the policy of the Czar—that the people not only fear his name and regard sacred his behests, but really enter into his schemes of aggrandisement. This seems scarcely likely of the mass of the people. As for those who may long for the possession of luxurious Byzantium and the sunlit shores of the Bosphorus, they know well enough that it is something far different from zeal for the Greek Church which induces Nicholas to engage in Turkish warfare—that it is but a noisy echo, thundered forth by imperial artillery, of the words of the late Emperor Alexander:—"Whilst we do not possess the Dardanelles, we are without the key of our own house: Russia must have Constantinople!"

THE SACRED DEBT.

FIRST PART.

AFTER the toils of the day were over, four students of a small German university met, as they were accustomed to do, at the apartments of one of their number for the performance of music. It is well known with what enthusiasm music is cultivated by the Germans. The majority of them possess a natural taste for this art, of which they are so fond; and the poor as well as the rich find in vocal or instrumental music a constant source of enjoyment. These young men, after their more serious studies, diverted themselves during the evening with playing quartettes composed for two violins, a viola, and a violoncello. During an interval of repose, their light, joyous conversation was interrupted by an old beggar, who, halting under the window, began to sing in a broken voice. He accompanied himself on a harp, which was too much injured by exposure to retain its more sonorous vibrations; nevertheless the accompaniment was soft and melodious, and the voice sweetly tremulous. The burden of his song ran thus:—

"Oh, give to poor Peter
A cottage, I cry,
An orchard around it,
His wants to supply.
Content with such riches,
Oh, think it not strange,
Estates with his highness
He would not exchange."

When he had concluded, he raised his eyes towards the window where stood the young men. One of them, throwing him a piece of money, said laughingly:

"Here, poor Peter, this is all we can do for you now; return some other time."

"Yes, in a year," said another.

"And we will give you sufficient to purchase a cottage," said a third.

"In a little orchard," added the fourth.

The old man was struck motionless. The lamp over the

doorway of a neighbouring inn shed a pale light upon his long white hair. After a moment's reflection, he again raised his eyes to the window and said:

"Young men, are you serious in what you say to me? I hope you would not mock an old man."

"God forbid!" replied Ernest with emotion. His three companions also called God to witness.

"Well, young men, I trust you; at this same hour, a year hence, I will return to this window. Adieu! May the Almighty, whose name you have invoked, bless your undertakings!"

Having given utterance to this benediction, the old man departed. The students closed the window, and again took up their instruments. In a few moments, three had forgotten this little scene, and trifled as before; but at the close of the evening Ernest said to them,—

"You appear quite at ease; I must say I am not so, when I reflect on the promise I have made."

"What promise," said the most heedless one.

"Why, the cottage and the orchard."

Their only reply was a shout of laughter, and thereupon the students separated.

The concerts were continued, and each time the friends met, Ernest reminded them of the promise made to the old man, but found that his zeal was most unwelcome.

"I am surprised," said he, "that you oblige me to insist upon a thing so self-evident. Either we have spoken seriously, and should act accordingly; or we have been guilty of impious mockery, and should endeavour to atone for our fault. My friends, I shall not sleep peacefully until I have found means to discharge our sacred debt."

"How can we discharge it?" said Christopher; "our parents deprive themselves of necessities to furnish us with a pitiful maintenance; and even could we live upon air for six months, and unite our little income, it would not be sufficient